

Commercial Truck Driver Protest - Operational Impacts - Situational Report - January 31, 2022

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<i>Situational Report</i>
Commercial Truck Driver Protest Operational Impacts
January 31, 2022

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Background

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On January 15, 2022, an Order of Council (OIC) was put in-place to mandate vaccinations for commercial truck drivers crossing the border. As a result, commercial truck drivers around the country have organized and started protesting outside port of entries (POEs) by blocking roads and slowing traffic, along with a convoy of commercial vehicles headed towards Ottawa to protest outside Parliament.

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Bottom Line:~

- Remaining protest activity nationally is not impacting POE operations.
- The Prairie Region is most impacted with US small convoys joining border crossings on the American side and similar movement along the Canadian border. RCMP increased presence and surveillance.
- Detailed update on the Coutts POE situation below – as of last night the commercial trucks at the POE we escorted back to the US and re-entered Canada safely escorted by US Law Enforcement.
- At Ambassador Bridge POE, information indicates commercial operators mobilizing from the U.S. to block the bridge. This movement is to coincide with Canadian drivers who intend to block the bridge on the Canadian side.
- In Ottawa, OPS encourages to avoid any travel to the downtown core.
- It is expected that disruptions to downtown Ottawa are likely to be reduced to normal levels within the next 24-48 hours

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US Protestors Identified at Port of Entries

- ~ Reports received from CBSA POEs regarding Enhanced Vigilance Exams of potential protestors:

POE	Vehicle #	Enhanced vigilance exams (PAX #)	Direct Back	Allowed to Leave	Granted Entry	Comments
Pac Hwy Traffic, PAC	2	3	3	0	~	Wrong turns attempting to protest at Peace Arch Park.
Douglas, PAC	10	21	18	3	~	Wrong turns attempting to protest at Peace Arch Park.
Lansdowne, NOR	1	2	~	~	2	Journalists looking to document the protests in Ottawa. Provided necessary credentials and had equipment consistent with their stated purpose of travel.

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Atlantic Region

Nil

Quebec Region

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Nil

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Northern Ontario Region

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Nil

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Southern Ontario Region

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Ambassador Bridge:

- ~ January 31, 2022 – Info received from the s.37 s.37 that there is a group of drivers and commercial operators mobilizing in Kentucky to depart for Detroit, Michigan along Interstate 75 to block the Ambassador Bridge; this is to coincide with Ontario / Canadian driver blocking the bridge on the Canadian side.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JET211fWWuc>

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Windsor-Detroit Tunnel:

- ~ Nil

Prairie Region

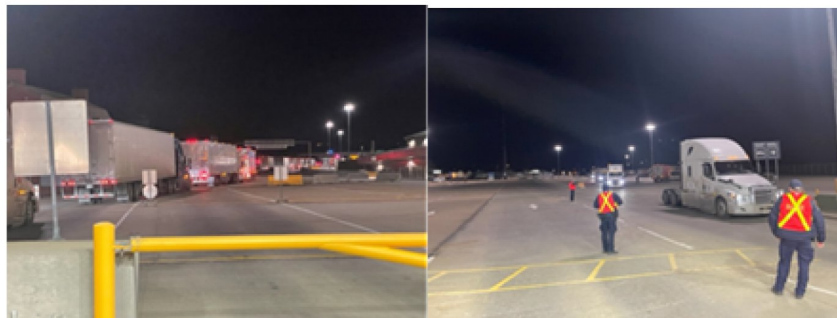
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Operational Plans have been developed and shared with HQ.

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Coutts: An Instagram movement called **S.37** is starting a protest on January 29, 2022 and will remain in the area of the POE until all mandates and restrictions are lifted. Information gathered suggests that trucks and vehicles will block access in both directions. The organizer contacted the CBSA to confirm that they will let emergency vehicles and CBSA employees through to the POE. An action plan has been put in place. RCMP and other officials have been contacted.

- ~ January 31, 2022 at 13:00hrs MT, the blockade remains in place north of the port. All officers and management have made it in to work safely. Non-critical staff were asked to stay home. A few truckers who did not wish to return to the US last night remain parked in the commercial parking lot. Same number of vehicles on the highway as yesterday - approximately 200.
- ~ January 31, 2022 – As of 09:55hrs MT, protesters have posted to social media regarding their perceptions of police activity in the area, and encouraging others to attend to support the highway blockage. The highway blockade continues, with traffic building on the northbound lane south of the POE as a result.
- ~ January 30, 2022 – As of 21:30hrs MT, the highway blockade continues North of the port on both north and southbound lanes. The RCMP continues to monitor the protests, and maintains an alternate access road that allows port staff to travel to and from work.
- ~ January 30, 2022 - At 19:30hrs MT, the commercial trucks in the CBSA parking lot and several of those parked immediately north of the port were successfully escorted back to the US. They will travel a short distance via the US under escort and re-enter Canada at another location near the port. The trucks will then continue up a secondary road that bypasses the blockade and rejoining the highway north of the blockade. There are 4 commercial trucks remaining in the parking lot that did not join the group.



- ~ January 30, 2022 – At 18:24hrs MT, arrangements were made to move the commercial vehicles in the CBSA parking lot back to the highway. These vehicles will be turned around to return to the US in order to transit back into Canada via other ports of entry. The blockade continues on the north and southbound lanes in the area north of the POE. Additional protesters arrived in commercial vehicles and buses this afternoon, with the total number of protesters peaking at approximately 500-700. RCMP continue to monitor and engage with the protesters. RCMP continue to hold an access road allowing CBSA staff to travel to and from the POE.
- ~ January 30, 2022 - At 12:40hrs MT, there was no change to the status of the blockade situation on the highway. The RCMP is maintaining a presence on scene. Some of the protesters attended to the commercial vehicles in the CBSA parking lot to provide them with fuel for their temperature controlled vans and to share bagged lunches with the drivers. The protesters have not been present in the CBSA area other than for these reasons.

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~**Carway:**

- January 31, 2022 as of 10:00hrs MT, there is no protest activity reported at the port, however, we are being told that approximately 20 trucks are enroute as part of convoy.

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Emerson:

- January 31, 2022 as of 13:00hrs ET, the convoy has mostly dispersed around POE. US CBP has all 3 of their commercial lanes open and have cleared most of the back log of genuine southbound commercial travel from this morning. Still pockets of the slow-moving convoy on both sides of HWY 75 but no operational impact at this time. Minimal northbound commercial traffic with only 1 comm. PIL open and no lineup.
- January 31, 2022 as of 12:00hrs ET, a convoy is active on north of the port of entry, making a slow loop of the north and southbound lanes. At times, the vehicles are taking up both lanes and the shoulders, completely blocking other traffic from passing, but they continue to move slowly and are not stopped on the highway for long periods of time.
- January 31, 2022 – As of 10:55hrs ET, information received from partners suggests a large convoy of potential protestors has left South Dakota with the intention of coming to Canada. Arrival area may include Saskatchewan or Manitoba; CBSA and domestic partners are assessing the situation, and will report as more information becomes available.
- January 31, 2022 – As of 08:44hrs ET, the convoy was reported to have resumed activities, starting several kilometers north of Emerson POE and heading south. Some CBSA staff have been delayed getting to work, as southbound commercial vehicle traffic is building behind the convoy. US CBP has been advised. No CBSA operational impacts have been reported.

Pacific Region

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- January 31, 2022, as of 10:54hrs PT, Kingsgate POE reported that a possible commercial convey is headed southbound to set up a blockade. Social media indicates that the convey is departing Cranbrook, BC.

Intelligence and Enforcement

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Intelligence Landscape (Updates in red)

BLUF: At this time (31JAN2022:1330), the overall threat to CBSA officers and infrastructure is low.

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ANALYSIS:

General Threats

- According to the RCMP, no formal organized plot of violence has been identified for Ottawa, however, there are a number of factors which could impact the situation as the protest mobilizes. This could include the number of people in the crowd, potential for altercations amongst protesters and with law enforcement and the influence of ideologically motivated actors or charismatic speakers. This may impact the temperature of the crowd and the potential for violence by a lone actor or fringe group cannot be discounted. ICAP assesses that these same factors can be attributed to protests organized around ports of entry (POE).
- The RCMP has also reported that while there have been some online calls for violent action during and after the protests they have not observed any credible threat of violence in these online conversations at this time.
- Protesters were observed lighting small fires in Ottawa, mainly for warmth due to the extreme cold. This phenomenon was not reported to be occurring at or near POE.

- ~ "A Facebook user shared a video and images from a small plane at (29JAN2022). The plane appeared to be circling the downtown Ottawa area. According to the post caption, the pilot flew from Syracuse. Unknown at this time if this individual will also fly over downtown Ottawa today." A review of TRC records and a request for information from the USCBP Air and Marine Operations Center yielded no further information.
- ~ There is currently no confirmed end time for the demonstrations although Ottawa Police Services have stated that they expect downtown Ottawa should be largely back to normal within 24 to 48 hours. Reaction to the protest is starting to galvanize local residents, with Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson saying to the CBC that he feels the protest has reached a boiling point. A shift in law enforcement tactics from keeping public order to clearing demonstrators may create conditions for both extreme actors and disgruntled protesters to retaliate. This would present a threat to CBSA NHQ, with the SRS building only four blocks from Parliament Hill.

POE Threats

- ~ An analysis of SRT reporting, OSINT, s.38 indicates that there are no credible threats currently identified for any POE.
- ~ SOR IEOD received info from the s.37 that there is a group of drivers and commercial operators mobilizing in Kentucky to depart for Detroit, Michigan along Interstate 75 to block the Ambassador Bridge; this is to coincide with Ontario / Canadian driver blocking the bridge on the Canadian side s.37
- ~ s.37 SOR IEOD as well as local management will continue to monitor the situation and report accordingly. At this time, there does not seem to be any overt threats to public safety, security or infrastructure.
- ~ s.38 media reports that some 30 trucks are on their way from North Dakota to Carway AB to cross and join the protests in Canada. CBSA officials are actively monitoring the situation to ensure that our officers apply the enhanced vigilance and all OIC measures to try and keep any US truckers in the rumoured convoy out. SRTs would be completed for any exam conducted.
- ~ Although most protests or rallies at POEs were limited in size and compliant, the demonstrations at Coutts and Emerson were slightly more aggressive in nature, both in size and level of disobedience.
- ~ The protest at Coutts persist and there is no room to allow any additional vehicles to proceed into Canada until the highway blockage north of the port is cleared. Several hundred additional protesters arrived and there is now an estimated 500-700 protesters. Organizers say there are another 800 trucks anticipated to join the protest. The port remains open and all staff have been able to report to work. The highway however is considered closed at this time. The RCMP have indicated that they will be bringing in reinforcements, and intend to start taking enforcement action to remove the protesters who are still blocking the north and southbound lanes north of the port. With police staging at the POE, this will bring greater emphasis on the Agency. As a result, the threat to CBSA officers or infrastructure may elevate, should the protesters retaliate. We are also seeing a general discontent among truckers and travellers stuck in the blockage at Coutts, with angry and aggressive statements seen online. This may also increase the threat to border service officers, when encountering these frustrated individuals.
- ~ Of the limited enhanced vigilance examinations conducted for foreign nationals at the POE during the weekend, none were identified as IMVE actors. There were two incidents involving firearms, but this was quickly determined to be the same US citizen with a lawful firearm who made a wrong turn into Canada at different Pacific Region POE while trying to travel to protests and rallies on the US side of the border. This occurred at Pacific Highway and then Douglas POE.
- ~ Small supporting rallies, convoys and protests occurred at some US borders points in support of the Canadian convoys and protests. Despite online propaganda indicating thousands of commercial motor vehicles (CMV) converging on the US side of the border and possibly attempting to cross into Canada, only small groups of personal type vehicles and very limited CMV materialized. All were contained to the US side of the border, as US CBP controlled the flow of traffic through the use of outbound examinations.

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Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism (IMVE)

- 1~ Ideologically motivated individuals who are anti-government, anti-authority and conspiratorial in nature may be present at POE protests. Although, known IMVE persons of interest were observed (both in person and online) in Ottawa, no such individuals were seen at POE. Similarly, a minor amount of IMVE related indicators (i.e. flags, signs, individuals outfitted in tactical gear, etc.) were displayed in Ottawa, this was not observed at POE.
- 1~ The online IMVE rhetoric continues to encompass a variety of conspiracy theories beyond the anti-vaccination movement including questioning the legitimacy of the Federal Government and QAnon-like beliefs regarding government officials engaging in illegal activities. However, this chatter is marginalized and discouraged by both convoy organizers and participants. Online content from IMVE persons of interest is becoming more aggressive, with violent statements regularly appearing involving how the 'party is over, now its time for war.'
- 1~ As the protest wanes, it is possible (40% probability) that some ideologically motivated actors may decide to create disorder influenced by complacency, frustration with Government response, or a need to demonstrate their role to online adherents. This is more likely to be seen in Ottawa, where persons of interest are already present and have the crowds to influence, rather than at POE where impact would be localized and have less shock. However, larger POE like Coutts, may potentially be suitable targets.

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Other Threats

- 1~ The convoy and protests may also attract individuals with religiously or racially motivated and ethno-nationalist views, though the protest itself is not about these ideologies. However, there has been no reporting that such actors are planning activities around this event.
- 1~ Demonstrators gathered at Minister of Public Safety Marco Mendicino's constituency office on Saturday to protest what they say is Islamophobia in the Canada Border Services Agency. Although not related to the Freedom Convoy, a small group who believes CBSA agents denied refugee status to Egyptians based on links to the Muslim Brotherhood is a terrorist group that promoted violence, and engaged in subversion against a democratic government, is based on Islamophobia. This group is known to the CBSA and is likely attempting to use the greater focus on government to advance their position.
- 1~ A small amount of counter protesters did appear in Ottawa, but there was no escalation or violence that occurred. However, there has been no reporting that such encounters occurred at POE.
- 1~ The size, unorganized potential and general distraction of these POE protests could create conditions where both criminal actors and migrants may use the events to illegally smuggle people and goods across the border into Canada by way of by-passing border controls. This may also include protesters who wish to join events on the Canadian side of the border, but do not want to report to Border Service Officers. At POE Coutts there were groups of pedestrians walking in proximity to the border. s.38

s.38

- 1~ The protests in Ottawa saw the use of a helicopter and drones, resulting in a NOTAM issuance restricting airspace in the Parliament district. However, there were no incidents of helicopters or drones reported at POE.
- 1~ The sheer amount of vehicles, both personal and CMV, now gathering in and around POE may create an unsafe environment from a traffic perspective. Reports of demonstrators parking and leaving their vehicles in precarious areas could lead to an increase of traffic accidents involving pedestrians and vehicle. This possibility could become a threat for CBSA officers beginning or ending their shifts. An unfortunate accident involving a CBSA officer may quickly escalate any protests.

- ~ The general disregard for COVID-19 public health measures and the size of POE protests may present a health-related threat, as symptomatic or asymptomatic carriers could create a super-spread event. No medical events were reported.
- ~ According to USCBP, both Canada and the United States have been witnessing various supply chain disruptions affecting the availability of goods in stores. Empty shelves have been appearing in even the larger retailers on both sides of the border. US Experts warn that both mandates will inevitably lead to supply chain collapse and a further surge in prices, including prices for food, gas and essential goods. Although this forecast is unverified, the impact of these POE protests, like Coutts, may further deteriorate this situation.

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Internal Taskforce

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No updates to report.

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Communications

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CBSA communications has received three new media calls received on this issue since the January 30th SitRep.

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Media coverage:

- ~ Coverage over the weekend and today spans from calling the protests peaceful to reporting on activities ranging from dancing on the tomb of the unknown soldier, hanging signs on the Terry Fox statue, demanding food at a homeless shelter and defecating in the streets. ([Toronto Star](#); [La Presse](#); [Winnipeg Free Press](#); [National Post](#); 1; [CTV News Ottawa](#); 1; [CBC News](#); [TV5 Monde](#)).
- ~ [CTV News](#) warns that calling the protests peaceful downplays non-violent dangers and that as of Sunday afternoon, there were no arrests made related to incidents of physical violence however confrontations and the need for de-escalation has been regularly required.
- ~ News outlets in Alberta are reporting that Premier Jason Kenney is calling for the massive vehicle blockade that is preventing access to the Canada-US border to end. ([CBC News Calgary](#); [Calgary Herald](#); [Radio-Canada](#); [CTV News Calgary](#); [Global News](#); [Canadian Press](#))

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Other Governmental Departments

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Government Operations Centre (GOC):

- ~ January 31, 2022 – As of 12:00hrs ET, monitoring and assessment of protests in Ottawa continue. GOC advises that OC Transpo service around downtown Ottawa has been suspended for the third day of protests, while Ottawa Police Service expects that disruptions to downtown Ottawa are likely to be reduced to normal levels within the next 24-48 hours.

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